

## Two Men and A "Widow"

By WILSON PARKS

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It was a struggle between Anson Davis and Caleb Jones as to who should win the love and the hand of Mary Doyle. There was rivalry, but no ill feeling. When Caleb won the prize, Anson slapped him on the back and said: "All right, Caleb. You are the lucky man. I don't believe I was ready to marry just yet anyhow. I'll wait two or three years and then marry your widow."

"That's mighty kind of you," answered Caleb. "I have heart trouble and may not live a year, and the thought that you'll take my place will make me die content."

Six months after the marriage Caleb Jones went down to the city on business. He had never been drunk in his life, but he got drunk to celebrate this occasion. While in a befuddled state he was carried aboard of a ship bound for the east, and when his sober senses returned he was on blue water. Meanwhile, as he did not return to his village home, an alarm was raised, and for the space of three weeks Caleb figured in the public press and police reports as "mysteriously missing." Then a body was found in the river, identified as his and shipped home for burial. Soon after the funeral Anson Davis called on the widow and said:

"Mary, I don't know whether Caleb ever told you about it or not, but there was an understanding between us that in case he died I was to step into his shoes."

"I believe he did mention something of the kind," replied the widow.

"That was kind of him and saves any further explanation. I guess you thought almost as much of me as you did of him, but he happened to save your life from a cow one day while I was out of town. Poor Caleb! We shall miss him and mourn for him, but at the end of the year we'll be married."

That settled it. The days and weeks and months went by, and the widow put off her weeds and Anson bought his wedding suit. The marriage day was set, the friends were invited and



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the minister was engaged, and another twenty-four hours would have made the Widow Jones Mrs. Davis, when in walked Caleb. He had recovered from his spree and returned from China.

"I wouldn't have blamed you a bit," he said to the astonished wife when he learned what was about to happen. "Of course you thought I was dead, and it was all right for you to marry Anson. I might have written, but somehow I never got around to it. Sorry to have made any trouble."

And when Anson Davis heard of the arrival and came rushing over with his eyes bulging out Caleb gave him a hearty handshake and said:

"Hope I haven't disappointed you, Anson. It was mighty kind of you to offer to marry Mary, and I'm glad she accepted you, but my coming home knocks it all out, of course. Don't feel hard toward me, old man."

"I'm disappointed, of course," replied Anson, "but I suppose I've got to put up with it. How's the heart trouble?"

"Awfully bad."

"Well, maybe you won't last long. It was a sort of mean trick, but remember that I stand ready to marry Mary whenever you drop out."

It was a year before Caleb had any further adventure, although his heart trouble grew worse, and the doctors told him he was liable to drop dead any day. He went away one day on a seven mile journey to visit a sister, and while crossing a bridge on which a crowd had gathered to watch the flood the bridge gave way with a crash and thirty-six people were swallowed up in the rushing waters. That Caleb was among the swallowed there could not be a doubt, as half a dozen people who knew him saw him go down. During the next three weeks most of the bodies were discovered, and his was among the number. The widow identified it by a dozen different marks and had been very particular about it, because Anson Davis had said:

"Mary, of course I shall marry you when the year is up, and we can't afford to have any more mistakes."

The body was duly buried and the weeds were put on for the second time. The tombstone over the grave said that Caleb was not dead, but only gone

away in that the corpse was partly right and partly wrong. Had it said that he was not dead, but only gone down the Ohio river, it would have hit the nail on the head.

For a time Anson Davis kept a doubt in his mind, and the widow never looked at Caleb's old boots without wondering if she could possibly have been mistaken in her identification. But as time went on Caleb's little ray of breaking-in-upon matrimonial programmes was forgotten. As the year was drawing to a close, Anson suggested that a date be named, and Mary named it.

It was to be a quiet wedding this time, and it was to be in the evening, and two days before the event was to come off Anson went up to the cemetery and made sure that Caleb was "at home" and likely to remain there. He reckoned without his host and only with a tombstone, however. The widow was dressed for the marriage and the minister on his way to the house when Caleb Jones returned for the second time and calmly announced:

"Well, Mary, I've got to disappoint you and Anson again, and I'm feeling mighty mean about it."

He had gone into the river, sure enough, but a beam had floated him for twenty miles before he was picked up by a steamboat. The steamer was going down the river and in a hurry, and Caleb was finally landed in Cincinnati. As he had got that far he thought he might as well go farther, and he tramped over three or four western states before setting his face homeward. The two times widow said he ought to make up his mind to live or die and quit making her nervous over it, but of course she was glad he had come back. With Anson Davis it was different, however.

"No, Caleb, I cannot take your hand," he said as he drew back. "You are not a man of your word. You are not a man to be depended on. Your dead body has been twice found, and there are two graves in which you are lying and two tombstones telling of your virtues, and yet here you are before us!"

"But don't be mad at me, Anson," pleaded Caleb.

"I am not mad, but hurt. The injustice of it rankles. Caleb Jones, hear me when I say that I will never, never marry your widow! I'm sorry for her, but I owe a duty to myself. If you die again, she'll have to go it alone for all of me!"

"Shoo!" said Caleb as his face lengthened and took on a look of sorrow. "I didn't suppose you felt like this about it, Anson. But, being you do, and being as I can't really blame you, I guess I'll have to stay at home and try and outlive Mary."

### The Mischievous Greyhound Puppy.

Greyhound puppies have the reputation of being the most mischievous of the mischievous brotherhood of puppies. They inherit this to some extent, for a large percentage of greyhounds when grown up are inveterate thieves and chicken killers not from any particular vice, but because "it is their nature to," and they have not the moral sense which other dogs possess.

The writer recently remarked when stopping in a country inn that one of the greyhounds which were allowed the run of the house had stolen the butter from the breakfast table. "Ah," was the reply, "I reckon he a'most live on that."

It is considered specially good for young greyhounds to be "boarded out" or "walked" when there is danger of overcrowding at home; but, as a high authority puts it, "the list of their delinquencies, including murdered cats, fowls, ducks, torn clothes and homesteads laid waste and devastated," may be made up for by a win at Alcatraz in compensation for the puppies' misdeeds.—London Spectator.

### An Old Superstition.

A curious example of superstition was made public the other day through the medium of the law courts of Berlin. A tree growing opposite the gateway of a farmer was noticed to be withering away and dying. On further investigation it was found that a deep hole had been bored in it, probably by some person who wished to kill it. As the tree somewhat incommoded the entrance to the farmer's house, he was charged with the deed and fined. He, however, appealed to a higher court and succeeded in proving that the hole had been bored by some superstitious person who believed in the old superstition that if illness attacks a household it can be driven away by "burying" it in a healthy tree. A hole is bored in the tree, and all kinds of medicines are buried in the hole, which is then carefully stopped up amid the singing of weird incantations. This could have been done by any superstitious person in the neighborhood, the farmer pointed out. The judge acquitted him.

### The One Thing He Wanted.

One day soon after Aguinaldo's capture and arrival at Manila General MacArthur decided to go to see him and find if he was being rightly treated. At the close of the visit the general asked Aguinaldo if there was anything he would like to have, whether papers, magazines, clothes, cigars or other articles. But the prisoner shook his head. He said that there was nothing at all that he wanted.

Just as the general was about to close the door Aguinaldo's face suddenly brightened, and the look in his eyes showed that he was trying to remember some name.

"What is it?" asked General MacArthur.

"There is just one thing in the world I want," said Aguinaldo, "if you can only get it for me. I have had it but once in my life, and that was at Hongkong. They said it was an American thing and that all Americans had it. It is—ice cream!" he said with great enthusiasm.

### PROOF THAT HE'D GROWN TIRED

Why the Young Wife Went Home to Her Mother So Suddenly.

The young bride's mother gently stroked her weeping daughter's hand and tried to comfort her. "Surely it cannot be true," she protested. "Why, you have been married but two months! George cannot have tired of you so soon as that." "Oh, but he has," sobbed the young bride, pitifully. "I am sure of it. I have seen that he has been growing colder and colder every day until yesterday," she wailed. "Yesterday he asked me to go out riding with him in his new automobile."

It was enough. Sternly her mother directed the broken-hearted girl to pack up her things and come home at once.

### Lessened Author's Conceit.

Brown was the proud author of his first and only novel and had arranged with his publisher for a few hundred advance copies for private distribution. The summer vacation was on, so he was taking the addresses of his clubmates that he might send them his book. When Black entered the room Brown was noting the address of one friend who was going to Bar Harbor. Turning to Black, the proud novelist queried: "Where shall I send your copy, Black?" "To Bar Harbor, also," replied Black. "To Bar Harbor?" asked Brown in surprise. "I didn't know you were going to Bar Harbor," "Neither am I," replied Black, and the drinks were on Brown.

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